



# The Advisor

A York County Newsletter for Professional Horticulturists and  
Workers in the Green Industry

January/February  
2002

## “ Jim’s Notes ”

With the completion of January comes the end of the Professional Horticultural Conference of Virginia, the largest horticultural education event on the east coast. Over 124 classes were taught by 87 speakers. It is an event that is planned, executed and evaluated by members of the horticultural industry. The board spends endless planning hours to ensure the best program that they can deliver. I attended great programs on plant material selection and integrated pest management. The message that I heard from speakers was to monitor your crops, identify the pest, and know your options. Speakers emphasized a concern of insects adapting and becoming immune to pesticides. Speakers encouraged rotating your class (chemistry) of pesticides to guard against this.

If you need to renew your pesticide application licenses, pay specific note to the article on page 4. Best wishes in the early season.

## “ New Editor of The Advisor ”

Shirlie Kimmel joins the Advisor as editor for the upcoming year. A master gardener, recognized floral designer, writer, and former CEO of a Virginia Beach corporation, Shirlie brings diverse skills to the Advisor. For comments or suggestions contact Shirlie Kimmel at: <mailto:skimmel3@cox.net>.



## NEWS BRIEFS

By Jim Orband

### York County Pruning Clinics

With our industry’s emphasis on integrated pest management, pruning is a cultural measure that assists in this effect. Pruning plants opens the canopy to allow light and air penetration. As light and air move through the plant freely, the incidence of disease and insects is reduced. Our need for pesticides is reduced because we are using a *cultural practice*, and not negatively affecting our water quality. York County pruning clinics are free and scheduled throughout the year and can be found in the Calendar section.

### Pest Identification

In the next few months, plants will be flourishing and pests will be present. Positive and accurate identification is important to a speedy cure. When you are not sure in identifying the pest, please have a second set of eyes evaluate the problem. Bring the sample to an extension agent. If the agent is unsure, we can send the sample to our labs and receive a scientific response to the request. Don’t waste time and money by treating the pest with the wrong product.

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## Calendar Of Events

- Feb 1-2 Virginia Biological Farming Conference & Trade Show, Fort Royal, <http://www.vabf.f2s.com>
- Feb 2 Pruning Clinic, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, True Value Hardware, Rt 17  
<http://www.yorkcounty.gov/vce>
- Feb 9 Pruning Clinic, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, Old Port Cove in Tabb,  
<http://www.yorkcounty.gov/vce>
- Feb 15 Maintaining Landscapes for the Future: The Bottom Line, sponsored by VCE  
Northampton Community Center, Hampton, 8:00 am - 3:15 pm, pre registration 727-1401
- Feb 15 Hear Say Gardening, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm, FM 89.5
- Feb 16 Pruning Clinic, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, Burton District of York County,  
<http://www.yorkcounty.gov/vce>
- Feb 23 Pruning Clinic, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, Ken Mathews Nursery
- March 2 Horticultural Extravaganza, 9:00 – 3:00 pm, St. Luke's Church, Grafton, pre register  
890-4940
- March 8 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification 3a, 3b, 5a, 6, 10, 60  
Northampton Community Center, pre-registration 727-1401
- March 8,9,10 Outdoor 2002, McDonalds's Garden Center, Hampton, Va
- March 15 Hear Say Gardening, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm, FM 89.5
- March 22 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification 3a, 3b, 5a, 6, 10, 60  
Virginia Beach Central Library, pre-registration 427-4769
- March 19 Advanced IPM Scout Training, University of Maryland, College Park, MD  
8:30am – 4:00 pm, information call Rondalvn Reese (301) 596-9413
- March 22, 23, 24 Home and Garden Show
- April 13 Gardening 2002, Christopher Newport University, pre-registration 594-8700

### Featured Event: Horticultural Extravaganza 2002, March 2

This annual daylong event presents a choice of over 20 horticultural topics ranging from perennials, vegetables, ornamentals, lawns, and butterfly gardening from which you select 5 to attend. The program includes topics for both the novice and advanced gardener. Call 890-4940 for more information.

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## **HORTICULTURAL BRIEFS**

### **Selecting and Using Plant Growth Regulators on Floricultural Crops**

Joyce G. Latimer, Extension Specialist,  
Greenhouse Crops, Virginia Tech

Plant growth regulators (PGRs) are chemicals that are designed to affect plant growth and/or development. They are applied for specific purposes to affect specific plant response. Although there is much scientific information on using PGRs in the greenhouse, it is not an exact science. Achieving the best results with PGRs is a combination of art and science – science tempered with a lot of trial and error and a good understanding of plant growth and development.

#### **Optimizing Results**

For best results, PGRs should be handled as production tools, like water and fertilizer. They should not be used as crutches for poor management of other cultural practices. PGRs should be an integrated part of your crop production cycle. They are most effective when applied at appropriate times to regulate plant growth and development. In other words, growth regulators cannot “shrink” an overgrown plant. They must be applied before the plant is overgrown to avoid plant stretch. *When planning PGRs in your production schedule, consider what you want to accomplish with treatment.*

Do you want to reduce the growth rate of the plant, improve its color and general condition

(toughness)? If so, you probably want a growth retardant such as B-Nine, Cycocel, A-Rest, or Sumagic. Do you want to increase plant branching for enhanced cutting production, or for a more bushy potted plant or hanging basket? If so, you probably want to use a branching agent or “chemical pincher” such as Atrimmec, Florel Brand Pistill (Florel), or Off-Shoot-O. Do you want to enhance flower initiation or synchronize flowering? If so, you probably want to use Cycocel, Florel, GibGro, ProGibb.

Answering these questions will indicate which type of PGR you need to use to accomplish your goal. It also will determine the most appropriate timing of the application. Then you will need to select a specific PGR in that class and determine the appropriate application method for the selected application.

#### **Read the Label**

Plant growth regulators are classified as pesticides. Therefore, they are subject to all of the same USDA record keeping and Worker Protection Standard rules as all other pesticides.

#### **Plant Growth Regulators for Height Control**

Most of the PGRs used in the greenhouse are used to regulate shoot growth of bedding plants, garden mums, poinsettias and other containerized crops. These PGRs are referred to as “growth retardants.” Typical growth retardants are B-Nine, Cycocel, A-Rest, Bonzi and Sumagic. These PGRs reduce plant height by inhibiting the production of gibberellins, the primary plant hormones responsible for cell elongation.

**Continued...**

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## Selecting and Using Plant Growth Regulators continued...

Therefore, their effects are primarily on stem, petiole and flower stalk tissues. Lesser effects are seen in reductions of leaf expansion, resulting in thicker leaves with dark color.

### Plant Growth Regulators for Lateral Branching

Another group of PGRs used in floricultural crops are those that enhance branching, including Florel, Trimmec and Off-Shoot-O. These PGRs are frequently called “chemical pinchers” because they generally inhibit the growth of the terminal shoots or enhance the growth if the lateral buds,

thereby increasing the development of lateral branches. They can be used to replace mechanical pinching of many crops. Often the increased branching also will reduce the overall height of the plant.

### Plant Growth Regulators for Flowering

Plant growth regulators can be used to enhance flowering (GibGro) or to remove flowers (Florel). To improve flowering, GibGro, which contains the growth promoter gibberellic acid, can be used to substitute for all or part of the chilling requirement of some woody ornamentals typically forced in the greenhouse, including azalea.

### Recommended Resource

For a complete read of this article including application rates and costs call the York County Extension office at 890-4940 (or your local extension office) and request:

### VCE Publication 430-102 / Selecting and Using Plant Growth Regulators on Floricultural Crops



## WHAT'S ONLINE?

By Shirly Kimmel

### Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association [www.valna.org](http://www.valna.org)

This site offers regional member listings of growers, retail garden centers, wholesale & retail nurseries, suppliers and landscape professionals.

VLNA.org offers an online [instant lookup of more than 2500 varieties of quality plants](#) grown in Virginia by 50 of the leading VNLA member growers. The site features a plant lookup by scientific name, common name, or by grower to list all the plants grown by an individual grower. It also provides information on the Virginia Certified Professional ('VCP') program (statewide examinations).

### Pesticide Safety Training [www.safnow.org](http://www.safnow.org)

State-of-the-art online/CD ROM training is available from the Society of American Florists (SAF) at safnow.org. Train employees in a cost efficient manner with little down time utilizing industry specific CD ROM training courses. Courses offered include general to advanced pesticide handling. Choose from: *Plant and Flower Care in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and *Greenhouse Pesticide Safety Training*. Courses offer EPA approved online training, including records and reports to certify compliance with OSHA and EPA Worker Protection Standards.

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## **BUSINESS BRIEFS**

By Shirlie Kimmel

### **2002 Tax Changes**

Changes in the 2002 tax codes that will affect your business include:

#### **Increased Section 179 Expense Deduction**

Applies to business owners. Section 179 (Expense Deduction), which allows businesses to currently deduct, rather than depreciate certain business property, has been increased by \$4,000 for 2001 to \$24,000.

#### **Standard Mileage Rate Increased**

Applies to individuals and businesses that use a car or truck for business purposes. The optional standard mileage rate for the cost of operating a car, van, panel truck, or pickup has been increased from 32-1/2 cents per mile in 2000 to 34-1/2 cents per mile for 2001.

#### **Self-Employment Tax - Income Base Increased (business)**

Applies to individuals and businesses that are subject to the self-employment tax. The maximum amount of earnings subject to the social security component of the self-employment tax has increased \$4,200 in 2001 to \$80,400 from \$76,200 in 2000.

#### **Wage Base for Social Security Tax Increased**

Applies to individuals that collect, and businesses that pay, wages subject to social security tax. The maximum amount of wages subject to the social security tax has increased \$4,200 in 2001 to

\$80,400. The employee and the employer each pay a maximum of \$4,984.80 in 2001.

#### **Medical Savings Accounts Extended**

Applies to individuals who are self-employed or who are employees of small businesses and have high-deductible health plans or no health plans at all. Medical savings accounts allow persons to save money for future medical expenses, and were scheduled to last until the end of 2000. This program has now been extended through 2002.

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